

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Park and Recreation Department
Conference Room, 11th Floor, City Hall
Monday, November 14, 2005
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Cherylane Adams, Dennis Brunner, Glen Dey, John Kemp, Doug Leeper, Janet Miller and Mick Tranbarger*

Also Present: Nancy Boewe – Schweiter East Neighborhood Association; Kathy Dittmer – Riverside Citizens Association; M.S. Mitchell – Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC); Rosemary Weber – GreenWay Alliance; and Doug Kupper, Mike North and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Miller called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

PUBLIC AGENDA

President Miller asked if there were any items for the public agenda. The following individuals spoke:

- Rosemary Weber, GreenWay Alliance – requested that in the future, the public be provided any maps given to the Board on land issues. She commented that she needed this information when she reported to the GreenWay Alliance. Staff commented that they would post any PDF map files with the agenda on the WEB page.
- M.S. Mitchell, MAPC – asked about follow-up on the re-plat request at Mount Carmel River Addition. Director Kupper said he would report on that issue under “Director’s Update”.
- Nancy Boewe, Schweiter East Neighborhood Association – mentioned correspondence regarding installation of a dedication marker to Henry Schweiter at Schweiter Park. Staff referred board members to a “hand out” which was correspondence dated November 6, 2005, from the Schweiter East Neighborhood Association. Ms. Boewe said they would like to place a small marker made of granite, bronze or some other permanent material near the children’s playground. She said they had applied for a “Bloom Grant” from Wichita Independent Neighborhoods (WIN), but WIN needed to insure the City had accepted the proposal before approving the grant. She also asked if the Board had specific size or material specifications for the group to follow.

President Miller asked staff if the City had any guidelines on this issue. Director Kupper said there were no guidelines per se; however, he said the normal procedure was that groups provided an artistic/architectural rendering of the proposed monument to the Park Board for their review and recommendation. He said the proposal is then sent to the Design Review Committee for their review and input. He said once both of these groups had made a recommendation, the proposal was placed on the City Council Agenda for the City to formally accept the donation.

There was brief discussion concerning maintenance responsibility and replacement due to wear and tear or vandalism. Director Kupper explained that the Park Department normally provided landscaping around the monument. He added that the donor organization was usually responsible for care of the donated monument itself. Nancy Boewe clarified that the cost estimate they received from the monument company included installation.

On motion by Dey, second by Adams, IT WAS VOTED to accept the Schweiter East Neighborhood Association's proposal to place a monument in Schweiter Park with the provision that they obtain funding, and that they return to the Park Board with an architectural rendering of the proposed monument for final approval. Motion carried 6-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **On motion by Kemp, second by Brunner, the minutes of the October 10, 2005, regular meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.**
2. **Naming of new East Side Park.** Director Kupper explained that the City had entered into negotiations to purchase approximately 14 acres of land at Greenwich and Central. He said the original purchase price was \$1.125 million; however, after staff received Council approval to purchase the property, the brokers representing the property owners added several stipulations to the contract including naming the park "Anthony Park" or paying an additional 10% fee; that the land remain parkland for at least 50 years; and raising the price to \$1.690 million. He said at the time the land purchase was approved, the City Council had also discussed the possibility of joint use of the property by constructing a Police Sub-Station and/or a Fire Station at the site.

There was brief discussion concerning City Council Policy #13 – Advisory Committee/Naming of Public Facilities which states "...it may include only the name of a person who is deceased." Adams expressed concern that if the Board recommended the park name, that it would be opening the door to other such requests and setting a precedent.

*Mick Tranbarger present.

There was further discussion concerning the City offering a counter bid and whether the City Council action was binding. Dey asked if there was a letter of intent or conveyance from the sellers. Mike North, Assistant City Attorney, explained that the City Council action approved the purchase and authorized staff to make an offer, but that there was no legal obligation on the part of the seller or the City. Director Kupper also mentioned the possibility of locating a neighborhood City Hall at the location or selling some of the commercial frontage along Central to help offset the cost of purchasing the property. Kemp mentioned that there had been discussion at the District Advisory Board III meeting concerning moving one of the fire stations. He said the majority of citizens at the meeting did not want the fire station moved.

Tranbarger asked why they came to the City with the land sale. Director Kupper explained that Arnold & Associates brokered the property and that the City was the only group to respond to the bid. He mentioned that there was a large new residential development just north and east of the property and that this was also an opportunity to buy parkland in a district where the City was

underserved. Responding to a question from President Miller, he stated that funds for the purchase would come from the Park Capital Improvement Program (CIP) 2005-2006 land acquisition line item.

On motion by Kemp, second by Adams, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend to the City Council that staff continue to negotiate for the purchase of the property, but pursuant to *City Council Policy #13 – Advisory Committee/Naming of Public Facilities*, not name the property “Anthony Park” nor pay the 10% penalty for not naming the parcel “Anthony Park”.

Rosemary Weber, GreenWay Alliance, asked if the 14 acres would be included in the “parks” inventory. Director Kupper responded that the frontage along Central, consisting of approximately two acres, would be City property probably designated for future development for City services.

3. **Reforestation (census and replanting plan)**. Director Kupper reported that the City plants approximately 2,500 trees annually. He said roughly 10% of which are planted in parks and golf courses, while 90% are planted along streets and right-of-ways. He asked if the Board had other ideas or direction concerning the planting program.

There was discussion concerning replacement of the urban forest; replacement of trees in Riverside Park during the recent renovation; the number of trees lost in the 2005 ice storm (estimated to be approximately 4,800) and how and when they would be replaced; the number of trees removed annually due to disease and other causes; and tree plantings by private vendors during street improvement projects. Dey commented that when he asked about replacement of 25 Scotch Pine trees, he was told that the City would be planting 900 trees this year and that they were all committed to other areas. President Miller referred to information provided at the August 2005 Park Board meeting that indicated the City has planted 2,800 trees annually since 1996. She said the report also indicated that parks and golf courses were on an eight-year tree planting rotation schedule for new trees.

Responding to a question from Dey, Director Kupper stated that no additional funding had been allocated to replace trees lost in the ice storm. Dey asked about moving trees to other locations, such as the trees that were taken out during the widening of 21st Street. Director Kupper stated that staff does that whenever feasible and mentioned that the trees planted at Grove Park came from Rock and 29th Streets. Adams commented that she thought the street tree plantings were important and that she had received comments from out of town guests on them.

Tranbarger said he thought staff was doing a good job and didn't see any reason to deviate from that current planting program. President Miller agreed and said she felt that the City's professionally trained arborists and other staff knew more about what was necessary to maintain the urban forest than she did as a lay person. Director Kupper said it was a philosophical question between streetscape or parks and golf courses. Kemp mentioned that as an avid golfer who has played all of the municipal courses, he has noticed that numerous trees have been removed from area golf courses citywide, especially at L.W. Clapp. Brunner said he was not in favor of changing the percentages and suggested leaving that decision to the professionals.

On motion by Leeper, second by Kemp, the Board recommended that for the next two planting seasons (2006/2007 and 2007/2008) staff plant 60% of the approximately 2,500 trees available annually in parks and golf courses and 40% of the trees on streets and right-of-ways.

On motion by Brunner, second by Adams, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to amend and approve the motion to read “40% in parks and golf courses and 60% on streets and right-of-ways”.

President Miller asked about the status of the census at Riverside Park. Director Kupper commented that there were no plans to complete that at this time; however, he would check with the Park and Recreation Supervisor.

4. **Regional Park Master Plan**. Director Kupper commented that one of the items in the Visioneering Wichita document called for the establishment of a regional park advisory board and completion of a park study to establish a regional park plan for Wichita. Responding to a question from President Miller, he said \$125,000 in CIP funds had been allocated for the study. He referred board members to a “hand out” which was a PowerPoint presentation to be presented to the City Council in a workshop session Tuesday, November 15. He explained that this was preliminary discussion to get input from the Board on the focus of the study.

Director Kupper briefly reviewed the presentation including the City’s Strategic Mission Statement and Strategic Priorities. He explained that regional parks were usually 100 acres or larger in size, such as Pawnee Prairie, Chisholm Creek, South Lakes, the Riverside Park System, Lake Afton and Sedgwick County Park; neighborhood parks were 5 acres or less in size; and community parks were anywhere up to 100 acres in size. He said if the study were to encompass all the small surrounding communities within Sedgwick County, then perhaps it could be jointly funded with Sedgwick County.

Director Kupper referred board members to the “*PARKS AND PATHWAYS – Park and Open Space Master Plan Wichita-Sedgwick County, Kansas*” dated September, 1996, document and asked how they felt about updating that plan as one way to approach the study. He said the plan could be updated with projections from 2006-2016.

Dey said he was more interested in a revised planning document that establishes a long-range plan to accommodate growth areas in the City and get ahead of the development curve. He added that he was also concerned not only about land acquisition, but development of parkland once it has been acquired. He said development of a park system whereby each park is developed as a turnkey operation when that park’s development is initiated. He said he hears from people who are frustrated that parks are developed little by little, which gives citizens the impression the City doesn’t know what it is doing. He mentioned an overall concept between developers, residents and other planners. He specifically mentioned development of the downtown arena and why the idea of an interior park or connecting greenways had not been included in the development process. Director Kupper commented that one of the City’s functions, as a part of the Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force, was to see how the neighborhood develops and make those connections.

There was discussion concerning the County's participation in the project. Responding to a question from Brunner, President Miller clarified that the County did not have a park advisory body equivalent to the City Board.

Leeper suggested a ten-year update to the "*PARKS AND PATHWAYS – Park and Open Space Master Plan Wichita-Sedgwick County, Kansas*" and asking surrounding communities and Sedgwick County to participate in the project. He also mentioned that there were still parks in Wichita that needed to be developed and that he would like to know where the City was on accomplishing that goal.

President Miller asked Director Kupper what he thought the Park Board's role should be in the process. Director Kupper said once input was collected from the Park Board and other entities, the Board would have an opportunity to review the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) before it was issued. In addition, he commented that once the RFP was developed for the project and a consultant hired, public hearings would need to be held to gather public input. President Miller asked about the possibility of including a board member or two on the Staff Screening and Selection Committee for the RFP. Director Kupper stated that an Administrative Regulation governed the make up of the committee, but that he would make that request to the City Manager.

Dey referred board members to pages 48-49 of the *PARKS AND PATHWAYS* document that addressed the goals and strategies to provide adequate parkland, open space, recreation facilities, and programs to meet the needs of the current and future residents of Wichita and Sedgwick County, and coordination of park and open space system management in Wichita, small cities and Sedgwick County, and protection and preservation of natural resources that add to the community's quality of life and health.

President Miller said perhaps this could be a legacy for the current board, to find out where the park system is and develop the next plan for the future. She said she felt any success was predicated on a good plan.

After considerable discussion and a brief review of the *PARKS AND PATHWAYS* document, it was the general consensus of the Board that this issue needed more in-depth discussion in a workshop, and that the December 12, 2005, Park Board meeting be devoted to exclusive discussion of this item before making a recommendation to the City Council. Board members agreed to re-study the *PARKS AND PATHWAYS* document and come up with some ideas and input for discussion, to be distributed prior to the December meeting.

5. **Recreation Center Study. Are We Obsolete?** President Miller said she felt a recreation center study should be a component of the broader regional park master plan study. Director Kupper referred board members to page 4 of the PowerPoint presentation on regional parks, which discussed target populations for recreation centers and the benefits of maintaining recreation centers to both the community and families.

Director Kupper said other issues included whether there was a need for construction of more athletic fields, playgrounds, water parks or expansion of Wichita Wildlife Habitat areas. He said although recreation centers only generated \$551,000 in revenues in 2004, over 593,631 citizens were served, many of them underprivileged and children. He said other questions were -- are

recreation centers still viable to provide after school supervision for youth, summer programs, pre-kindergarten programming and other activities other than traditional classes and are they targeting the right populations -- children, youth, adults, seniors and at risk groups? He also added -- how should a recreation center's success be measured -- by cost recovery, attendance or some other criteria?

Brunner mentioned that the communities surrounding some of the recreation centers have changed since the centers were built. He wondered if the centers were meeting the current neighborhood's needs. President Miller asked if the purpose of the study was to answer those questions or should those questions be answered prior to the study being conducted. Dey said he was concerned about using "cost recovery" as a measure because he believed the centers provided a service and to low-income persons, particularly in terms of keeping youth out of correction facilities. He said he would like the study to explore those issues. Director Kupper commented that park programs provide a service to the citizens of Wichita and will never be able to make it if they are forced to be profit driven.

Tranbarger commented that cost recovery should be a goal, but he did not believe the success of any individual location should be based on that alone. Leeper commented that he "grew up" in Wichita's recreation centers and that they served a vital purpose in the community. He said he would like to survey the community to see what types of services they want the centers to provide.

It was the general consensus of the Board that this issue was an integral part of the Regional Park Master Plan and that this issue be further discussed at the December 12, 2005, Park Board workshop. President Miller requested that board members talk to their constituents, Council Members and others and e-mail her ideas for further discussion on the 12th. Director Kupper said other questions to consider were should the City subsidize the centers, and if so, by how much? And, is it the City's responsibility to provide recreational opportunities for the masses?

6. **Director's Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following item.

- **Re-plat request at Mount Carmel River Addition** – stated that an agenda report to the City Council requesting the moratorium had been prepared and was being reviewed. President Miller expressed concern that the MAPC may take action on the item. M.S. Mitchell said the last MAPC action was to refer the request to the Park Board for review and input.
- **Adopt-a-Park Program** – Adams asked if board members had brought up participation in the program at their respective neighborhood association meetings. She said if not, would they please do that and let her know what action the neighborhood association took on the item. She said the Mayor would appreciate it.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:40 p.m.

Janet Miller, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett
Recording Secretary